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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1, 2, 4, 6, 13, 14, 16 and 18-20 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, Applicant amends claims 1, 4, 13 and 16 and cancels claims 3 and 15.

Claims 1-4, 6, 13-16 and 18-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Takubo et al. (US Patent No. 6,329,610) in view of Tadaharu et al. (JP 6-268369) and Selna (U.S. 5,640,048). Claims 3 and 15 have been canceled. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of claims 1, 2, 4, 6, 13, 14, 16, and 18-20.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite:

**"A laminated ceramic electronic component comprising:
a laminated member including a plurality of stacked ceramic layers having at least two first ceramic layers and at least one second ceramic layer which is thinner than said at least two first ceramic layers; and
wiring conductors provided for a certain layer of said ceramic layers and including a via-hole conductor extending through said certain layer and a conductor extending along the principal surface of said certain layer; wherein
via-hole conductors of different ceramic layers have different sectional sizes; and
the aspect ratio expressed by H/D is within the range of approximately 0.1 to approximately 3.0, wherein H and D represent the height and radial length for each of said via-hole conductors, respectively;
a first via-hole conductor extends through each of said at least two first ceramic layers;
a second via-hole conductor extends through said at least one second ceramic layer; and
the at least one second ceramic layer is disposed inside the laminated member, such that the at least one second ceramic layer is disposed between the at least two first ceramic layers."** (emphasis added)

Applicant's claim 13 recites features which are similar to the features recited in Applicant's claim 1, including the above-emphasized features.

With the unique combination and arrangement of elements recited in Applicant's claims 1 and 13, since the second via-hole conductor extends through the second

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ceramic layer which is thinner than the at least two first ceramic layers, conductive paste can be effectively filled into the via-holes having different sizes in the first and second ceramic layers without loss of the conductive paste. As a result, the reliability of electrical conductivity of the via-holes conductors is improved. In addition, since the at least one second ceramic layer is disposed between the at least two first ceramic layers, the thinner second ceramic layer is supported by the thicker first ceramic layers.

The Examiner alleged that Takubo et al. teaches all of the features recited in claims 1 and 13, except for the aspect ratio, H/D , being within the range of approximately .1 to approximately 3. The Examiner further alleged that Tadaharu teaches an aspect ratio, H/D , that is in the range of approximately .1 to approximately 3 (for example, .25). Thus, the Examiner concluded that it would have been obvious to "incorporate the aspect ratio of .25 for each via hole conductor of Takubo [et al.], since the aspect ratio would eliminate continuity defects due to the shortage of filling in a via hole and defects at the time of forming a wiring pattern due to the extrusion of a via land as taught by Tadaharu." Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Applicant notes that although the Examiner included Selna in the rejection of claims 1-4, 6, 13-16 and 18-20, the Examiner only relied upon Selna to allegedly teach the features recited in canceled claims 19 and 20.

Applicant has amended claims 1 and 13 to recite the features of "a laminated member including a plurality of stacked ceramic layers having at least two first ceramic layers and at least one second ceramic layer which is thinner than said at least two first ceramic layers" and "the at least one second ceramic layer is disposed inside the laminated member, such that the at least one second ceramic layer is disposed between the at least two first ceramic layers."

None of Takubo et al., Tadaharu and Selna teaches or suggests the features of "a laminated member including a plurality of stacked ceramic layers having at least two first ceramic layers and at least one second ceramic layer which is thinner than said at least two first ceramic layers" and "the at least one second ceramic layer is disposed

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inside the laminated member, such that the at least one second ceramic layer is disposed between the at least two first ceramic layers" as recited in Applicant's claims 1 and 13.

In contrast, Takubo et al. teaches a completely different arrangement of insulation layers in which a third insulation layer 23 which is disposed between a first insulation layer 21 and a second insulation layer 22, wherein the third insulation layer 23 is thinner than the first insulation layer 21 and thicker than the second insulation layer 22. That is, Takubo et al. teaches an entirely different construction in which three layers are stacked on each other and are arranged in order of increasing or decreasing thickness, with a middle layer being sandwiched by one thicker layer and one thinner layer. Takubo et al. fails to teach or suggest any insulation/ceramic layer which is thinner than two other insulation/ceramic layers between which it is disposed. Thus, Takubo et al. certainly fails to teach or suggest the features of "a laminated member including a plurality of stacked ceramic layers having at least two first ceramic layers and at least one second ceramic layer which is thinner than said at least two first ceramic layers" and "the at least one second ceramic layer is disposed inside the laminated member, such that the at least one second ceramic layer is disposed between the at least two first ceramic layers" as recited in Applicant's claims 1 and 13.

Tadaharu fails to teach or suggest any laminated member which includes three ceramic layers. At best, Tadaharu teaches a laminated member including only two layers, and thus, certainly fails to teach or suggest the features of "a laminated member including a plurality of stacked ceramic layers having at least two first ceramic layers and at least one second ceramic layer which is thinner than said at least two first ceramic layers" and "the at least one second ceramic layer is disposed inside the laminated member, such that the at least one second ceramic layer is disposed between the at least two first ceramic layers" as recited in Applicant's claims 1 and 13.

Although Fig. 3 of Selna teaches a laminated body 100 including three layers 272, 282 and 290, (1) Selna fails to teach or suggest that any of the layers 272, 282 and

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290 are ceramic layers, and (2) the layer 290 of Selna disposed between layers 272 and 282 is thicker than the layers 272 and 282, **NOT thinner than** the layers 272, 282. Thus, Selna teaches the exact opposite of Applicant's claimed invention, and certainly fails to teach or suggest the features of "a laminated member including a plurality of stacked ceramic layers having at least two first ceramic layers and at least one second ceramic layer which is thinner than said at least two first ceramic layers" and "the at least one second ceramic layer is disposed inside the laminated member, such that the second ceramic layer is disposed between the at least two first ceramic layers" as recited in Applicant's claims 1 and 13.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that Takubo et al., Tadaharu and Selna, applied alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest the unique combination and arrangement of elements recited in claims 1 and 13 of the present application.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Takubo et al. in view of Tadaharu and Selna.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1 and 13 are allowable. Claims 2, 4, 6, 14, 16 and 18-20 depend upon claims 1 and 13, and are therefore allowable for at least the reasons that claims 1 and 13 are allowable.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance are solicited.

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The Commissioner is authorized to charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account No. 50-1353.

Respectfully submitted,

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